

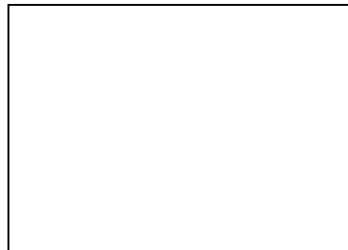
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12 December 1975

SUBJECT: The Outlook for Timor

1. Indonesian forces have now established their control over Portuguese Timor's two principal cities, Dili and Baucau. It does not appear from such information as we have that Fretilin resisted strongly in either city. Instead its leaders seem to have decided to conserve men and supplies for a future guerrilla campaign. Whatever their tactics, we do not believe that Fretilin forces will be able to obstruct a fairly rapid and complete extension of Indonesian control over remaining administrative centers. Nor will they be able to block the establishment of an Indonesian-sponsored regime in Dili. However, they will be able to carry on guerrilla activities for some time to come. During the period before some act of self-determination takes place, Fretilin will probably try very hard by such activities to obstruct Djakarta's plans to incorporate the territory into Indonesia and to keep foreign attention on developments in Timor. Most members of the world community, however, want to bury the issue as quickly as possible and the Indonesians will probably be able to contain guerrilla activity (and news about guerrilla activity) below a level that could cause significant international embarrassment.

The Contending Forces

2. Indonesia's forces already outweigh Fretilin's significantly.

- Indonesia now has well over 15,000 troops on the island, is moving more in, and can and will reinforce substantially if it needs to.
- Fretilin reportedly has 5 to 10,000 troops; it may recruit more, but it cannot begin to match Indonesia's reinforcement capability.

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3. The equipment and materiel available to Indonesian forces, although seriously deficient by modern military standards, is far superior to Fretilin's.

- Fretilin has apparently stocked supplies in the hills, but the more active its guerrilla campaign the sooner it will face resupply problems.
- Its prospects for external support are dim. Most of Djakarta's Asian neighbors -- despite domestic rumblings in some -- support or at least accept the extension of Indonesian control over Timor.
- Hanoi and Peking, while they have voiced support for Fretilin's cause, obviously do not regard it as a viable contender for power. Neither Peking nor Moscow is likely to complicate active efforts to improve relations with Djakarta by providing arms to Fretilin.
- Although Indonesia's ability to police the coast and surrounding waters is limited, smuggled arms are unlikely to reach Fretilin in any large quantity. No country capable of providing and transporting arms in quantity seems likely to regard such a course as very profitable politically. Nor does it seem likely that there will be the funds available to make commercially attractive the movement of arms to a remote area well off the established Southeast Asian smuggling routes.

#### Prospects

4. Indonesia's overt military campaign, launched on December 6, has not been carried out on schedule. Delays and difficulties, however, have not been caused by Fretilin

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resistance as much as by poor weather, [ ]

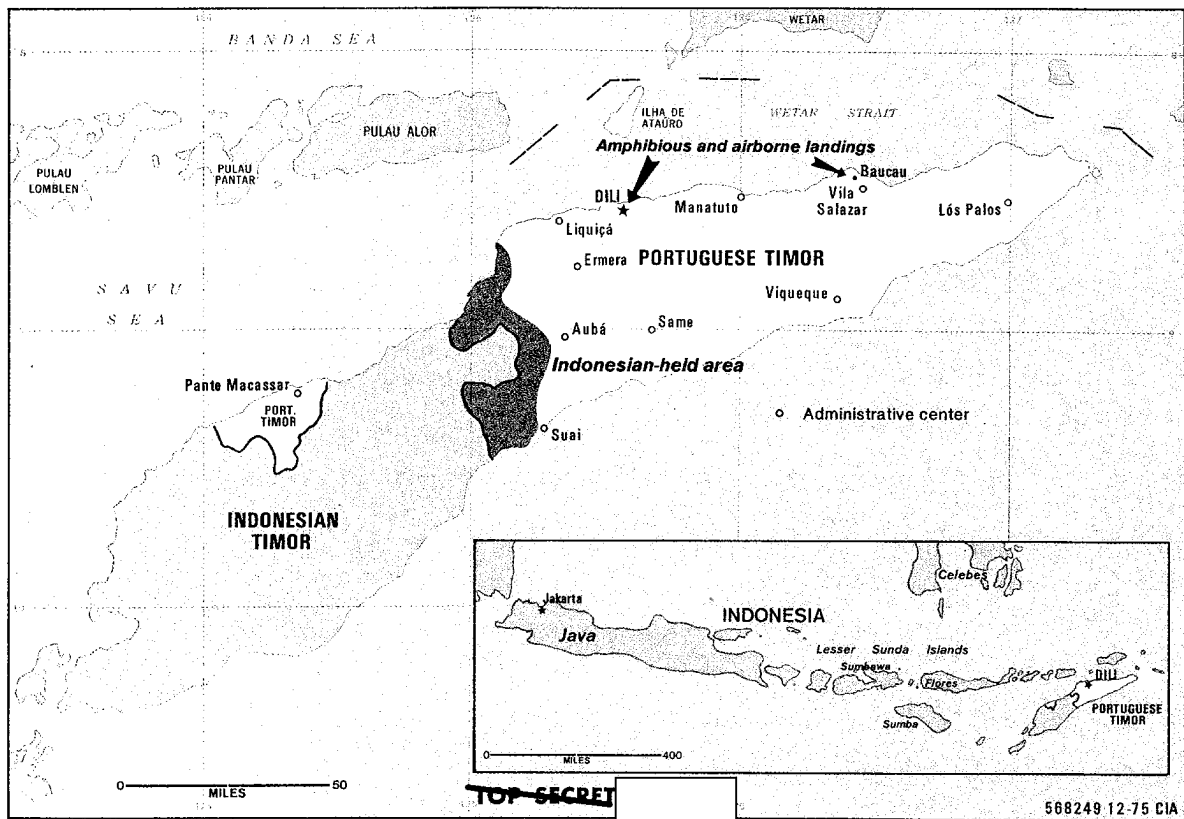
[ ] Notwithstanding these difficulties, Indonesia's efforts to establish military control over remaining administrative centers (see map) are unlikely to be contested very seriously. Similarly, Djakarta's overwhelming superiority in men and materiel should prevail against any effort to retake areas occupied by Indonesian forces. The situation would be a different one should Indonesia transfer the burden of military defense to its Timorese allies. Drawn for the most part from the local bureaucracy and tribal leadership, they have shown themselves incapable of coping militarily with Fretilin's fighting forces, the core of which is made up of Timorese who served in the local Portuguese military force, and highly politicized after the April 1974 coup in Portugal through contact with newly-arrived Portuguese officers who have since departed. No such transfer is likely in any real sense, however. Indonesia will try to mask its continuing military presence as much as it can. But -- having delayed its overt intervention in force until Suharto's concern with foreign reactions was outweighed by his conviction that his country's interests were being seriously threatened -- Indonesia will not now draw down its forces in a way that would risk its continued control.

5. Fretilin's guerrilla campaign will certainly cause Indonesia some difficulties, perhaps for a fairly long time. The terrain is hospitable to guerrilla activity and Fretilin will not lack for resources to engage in terrorism and harassment. A primitive roadnet will make it difficult for regular forces to move rapidly against small groups of insurgents and Indonesian troops will be operating in alien territory among people whose language they do not speak.

6. We cannot estimate how much support Fretilin will be able to attract in the countryside. In an essentially tribal society it will be difficult for Fretilin to play on nationalist sentiments. Long-standing tribal disputes

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## Indonesian Campaign



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and enmities sharpened when the Portuguese gave up all pretense of administration earlier this year and some of these rivalries began to take on pro- and anti-Indonesian overtones. Fretilin has apparently been able to ally itself with the tribal enemies of the pro-Indonesian groups in many areas and this will reinforce its staying power in the countryside. But Indonesians have also had some success in manipulating the local leadership. Since they have little knowledge of tribal politics, they will be at some disadvantage in this regard but they may be able to compensate by the superior material rewards at their command.

7. Although Fretilin-led guerrilla activities will cause political and military problems for Indonesia, we do not believe these problems will be formidable ones. The Indonesian armed forces have had long and successful experience in suppressing insurgent activities and the area in which they will be operating, although hard to get around in, is also very small and isolated. Its isolation will facilitate the efforts the Indonesians are sure to make to keep information on Timorese dissident activities from reaching the outside world. Until such time as Djakarta has been able to obtain some form of Timorese agreement to incorporation in Indonesia, Fretilin will probably make a maximum effort to publicize its own cause and attempts at spectacular shows of resistance will be likely. With their spokesman still active in Australia and presumably in New York, and particularly if there is some form of UN presence on the island, their guerrilla actions could reverberate outside Timor. But over the longer range, as is the case with continued resistance in Irian, such actions are unlikely either to seriously disturb Indonesian control or to arouse much foreign interest.

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